

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with James Rodgers on 23 September 2009.

The following editorial changes have been made to place the application in condition for allowance:

In the Claims:

In claim 1, line 4: "the periphery" has been changed to --a periphery--

In claim 1, lines 5 - 6: "the bulbous portions house the rigid elements" has been changed to --each of the bulbous portions houses one of the rigid elements--

In claim 1, line 7: "a rigid element" has been changed to --the rigid element--

In claim 2, line 2: "the length" has been changed to --a length--

In claim 3, line 2: "the length" has been changed to --a length--

In claim 11, line 4: "each bulbous portion" has been changed to --each of the bulbous portions--

In claim 11, line 5: "the periphery of each bulbous portion" has been changed to --a periphery of each of the bulbous portions--

In claim 11, lines 6 - 7: "the bulbous portions house the rigid elements" has been changed to --each of the bulbous portions houses one of the rigid elements--

In claim 11, line 8: "a rigid element" has been changed to --the rigid element--

In claim 13, line 3: "each bulbous portion" has been changed to --each of the bulbous portions--

In claim 13, line 4: "the periphery of each bulbous portion" has been changed to --a periphery of each of the bulbous portions--

In claim 13, line 6: "a pre-formed bulbous portion" has been changed to --the pre-formed bulbous portion--

In claim 13, line 10: "the original" has been changed to --an original--

In claim 16, line 3: "each pre-formed bulbous portion" has been changed to --each of the pre-formed bulbous portions--

In claim 16, lines 4 - 5: "the periphery of each pre-formed bulbous portion" has been changed to --a periphery of each of the pre-formed bulbous portions--

In claim 16, lines 6 - 7: "the rigid elements are inserted into a pre-formed bulbous portion" has been changed to --one of the rigid elements is inserted into one of the pre-formed bulbous portions--

In claim 16, line 9: "a rigid element" has been changed to --the rigid element--

In claim 17, line 4: "a bulbous portion" has been changed to --one of the bulbous portions--

In claim 17, line 7: "the original" has been changed to --an original--

In claim 17, line 8: "each rigid element" has been changed to --the rigid element--

In claim 17, line 10: "each rigid element" has been changed to --the rigid element--

In claim 18, line 3: "the periphery" has been changed to --a periphery--

In claim 19, line 2: --of the-- has been inserted before "bulbous portions"

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to SEAN D. ANDRISH whose telephone number is (571)270-3098. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon - Fri, 7:30am - 5:00pm, Alternate Fri off, EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Bagnell can be reached on (571) 272-6999. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/David J. Bagnell/
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SDA
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